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Executive Summary
1999 Canal Ranch
Habitat Restoration Demonstration Project, Phase II

Applicant:
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
Wildlife and Inland Fisheries Division
Central Valley Bay-Delta Branch
and
Region 2

Project Description

In June of 1996, a conceptual habitat management plan was developed for the Canal Ranch Partners, L.L.C. by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) entitled "Habitat Management Plan for the Canal Ranch Fish and Wildlife Management Area." The plan includes restoration of seasonal wetlands, riparian, and shaded riverine aquatic habitats and enhancement of agricultural management for fish and wildlife on 3,070 acres located in the northeastern Delta, San Joaquin County. Implementation of the plan will be carried out in several phases over multiple years. This proposal is requesting funding for Phase II.

During Phase II, the land owners, engineers, and a team of biologists and botanists from Region 2 and the divisions and branches listed above will work together to ground truth the Conceptual Habitat Management Plan with the survey data from Phase I. At this point, any necessary changes will be made and incorporated into a Feasibility Level Habitat Management Plan for Canal Ranch. This plan will include management strategies for the restoration of native plant communities; potential reintroduction of the Sacramento perch in selected ponds on Canal Ranch; development of seasonal wetlands and habitats suitable for Northern pintail, other waterfowl, and greater sandhill cranes; educational and interpretive opportunities; and to provide high quality public hunting and educational opportunities.

The project dovetails with long-term wetland goals set for the Central Valley and Delta by the North America Joint Venture Program, the visions, implementation objectives, and targets for CALFED's ERPP, and the CVPIA.

Benefits

In addition to meeting the goals and objectives of various programs, there will be numerous additional benefits. Those benefits include:

- Long-term protection of land from uses that are incompatible with restoration and maintenance of the Delta.
- Management with emphasis on fish and wildlife will reduce subsidence which, if

allowed to continue at current rates, would increase the risk of structural levee failure and adverse impacts to the wildlife resources using the Delta.

- Opportunities for the reintroduction of the Sacramento perch.
- Habitat for restoration of rare plant communities.
- Habitat for Swainson's hawks and other neotropical migrants.
- Habitat at the land-water interface in Beaver and Hog sloughs will provide enhanced spawning and rearing habitat for delta smelt and splittail and rearing habitat for chinook salmon.
- Increased wintering and breeding waterfowl use.

No significant negative third party impacts were identified for this project.

Applicant Qualifications

The California Department of Fish and Game has extensive experience in developing and managing fish and wildlife habitat through the numerous wildlife areas and conservation easements throughout the State. The principle investigator has worked in the Delta for five years and has experience with the development and monitoring of a variety of habitats. The interdisciplinary team will be composed of experienced botanists, wildlife interpreters, and specialists in the science of restoration. The primary focus of qualifications will be on the engineering consultant. That consultant will be selected in Phase II.

Monitoring and Data Collection Methodology

Monitoring will begin with implementation in Phase III and continue until all objectives identified in the Master Plan have been met. Status reports will be written each year and submitted for review to the interdisciplinary team and CALFED. Monitoring will include, but will not be limited to: water quality in Beaver and Hog sloughs and the Mokelumne River; wildlife use patterns in all of the habitat areas; vegetation growth, trends, and recruitment throughout the restoration area to monitor plant composition and makeup; and, fisheries occurrence in the restored in-stream habitats.

Project Contact

The proposal was coordinated by Brad Burkholder, Wildlife Biologist with the Central Valley Bay-Delta Branch. Please contact Mr. Burkholder at CALNET 8-423-7800 for questions or further information.